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foreshadowed doom in the king's prophecy, has so altogether escaped Kristofer Janson's notice. It is again his regard for truth which must have blinded his eye; the Saga probably does not speak of any such struggle in Sigmund's mind, and consequently he has not felt at liberty to introduce it.

The book ends with a *draapa*, or death-song, over Sigmund, written in rhymeless, alliterated verses, in the style of the old Norse scalds:—

“ Fallen the free-born  
Fearless swordsman;  
The hopes of his land  
With him are buried.  
Lifeless lies he!  
But, nay! late living;  
Living till Saga  
Sleep-bound slumbers.”

HJALMAR HJORTH BOYESEN.

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#### ART. VI.—THE POLITICAL CAMPAIGN OF 1872.

THE description of a well-known public character as “a first-rate second-rate man,” might be so modified as to give a very fair idea of the relative importance of the campaign now technically said to be convulsing the country. Of course the press and the speakers engaged in rallying the opposing sides speak of the issues at stake as simply momentous and unprecedented, involving practically nothing less than national ruin in the inevitable failure at the polls of one or the other of these irreconcilable classes of prophets; and we observe that even so self-contained a participant in the struggle as Mr. Wendell Phillips claims that his candidate stands for “loyalty to-day and salvation ever after.” This is the traditional electioneering war-cry, which with “Vote early,” “Get out the last man,” etc., has done good service in every Presidential campaign thus far, and, it is presumed, will continue in favor till our political duties are resolved by the processes of pure reason. The truth is, something has been gained by the great elemental epoch from which we are just emerging. The rehabilitation

of the nation, by the sword and civil ordinances, is so far complete and secure, that the people of this generation, at least, have earned the right to be relieved from vaticinations of immeasurable woe to their institutions as the result of any election, State or national. In fact, the present campaign — whether we look to the professions formally made by the contending parties, or to the construction of these parties and their obvious aims and tendencies — is essentially of but an ordinary degree of importance. Personalities have characterized it to an unusual extent; policies, rather than principles, are in the minds of a majority of the voters; feelings of confidence and distrust, rather than any profound convictions, will control the final decision; and, whatever that may be, the nation will continue to move on in its present orbit, perhaps more or less slowly, as the decision is this way or that, but with its course and destinies materially unchanged.

Still, the periodical winding up of our political machinery is always a matter of vital concern to thoughtful citizens; and the pending contest, whatever else may be said of it, is certainly one of the most curious in its developments, and possibly one of the most interesting in its suggestions, that this generation has known. It may be difficult, in the midst of the tumult, to trace its springs and to gauge the various forces involved, but its main characteristics are so obvious that there can be no disagreement in regard to them among candid observers, except that arising from their respective points of view.

The first question of fact that claims attention relates to the acceptability of President Grant to the Republican party; because upon that have really hinged the chief peculiarities of the canvass, such as the Republican defection, the shaping of the reform agitation, the Cincinnati movement, the nomination of Horace Greeley, the coalition consummated at Baltimore, the Louisville Convention, and others to be considered hereafter. According to the records of his party, as well as the assertions of the Republican stump orators, General Grant appears to be one of the most popular Presidents that we ever had. He has received quite steadily the support of the Republican majorities of the two Houses of Congress, and he has been nominated

by acclamation in a national convention, which, notwithstanding the official influences clearly apparent in its construction and deliberations, was as free as such gatherings of a party in power ever are, and did undoubtedly reflect the unpurchased and unpurchasable sentiment of the Republicans of the Union. For all that, it was not a nomination made with the heartiness and substantial unanimity of that made four years previous by the same party. In other words, the President, during the first half of his administration, had occasioned some serious and wide-spread disappointment among his supporters, and it is not difficult to see how it was done. Going into power with an unusual exemption from partisan and clique encumbrances, it was expected that, while he would be faithful to Republican ideas, he would give the country an administration exceptionally independent of rings, lobbies, and back-stair influences generally. The man himself was, undoubtedly, animated by a sincere desire and resolve to meet these expectations; but he was a soldier thrust into a strange field, where his peculiar strength did not seem to be available, and where his knowledge was often at fault, while his civil character was wholly unformed. Consequently, when he had fallen into improprieties here, by the official recognition of men who had been his pecuniary benefactors, and had run against the laws there, as in the nomination of A. T. Stewart as Secretary of the Treasury, and had been baffled and set back altogether by public sentiment, as in the San Domingo matter, he began to realize the difficulties of his position, and there were not wanting those who discerned in his embarrassment their own selfish opportunity. Insensibly the semblance, if not something more, of rings, military, senatorial, and otherwise, as described by Mr. Sumner's unsparing pen began to appear. Some unfit appointments were made and some good ones were unmade. And it was particularly observed that officers who had identified themselves with the rising aspirations for reform, like Secretary Cox and David A. Wells, were among the first to be retired. The removal of Mr. Motley from the post of Minister to the Court of St. James, and the degradation of Mr. Sumner from the chairmanship of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, gave a powerful impulse to the disquiet of the

Republican masses, in view of the tendency at Washington, and to a feeling of dissatisfaction with the President, although it found no immediate expression in proportion to its extent. Except in the simplicity and honesty of his character, the President's traits were not calculated to propitiate the critical disposition thus evoked. If he had had the slightest touch of the dramatic dignity of Marlborough, or of the electric tact of Napoleon, he might have shrouded the errors of inexperience beneath a halo of well-earned prestige; but being as plain as an average private, and as silent as a model picket, his short-comings lay open to the dullest observation, with everybody welcome to make the most of them. Hence it happened that, without regard to the question whether nine or thirteen of the President's relatives were in office, — surely about the smallest question ever pressed by grave statesmen upon the attention of the American people, — and independent of the fact that there were grave differences of opinion among Republicans as to the merits of the President's Southern policy, and in defiance of the other more pertinent fact that his administration, on the whole, was a fair one, and was, in some respects, extraordinarily good and effective, the renomination, after all, was carried with the rather qualified heartiness and formal unanimity of which we have spoken.

The truth is, two influences were, throughout, operative upon the judgment which General Grant's administration had to encounter, and which colored the impression produced by every incident of importance as it arose. The first came from that accumulation of grievances, disappointments, hopes deferred, and the other personal discontents which inevitably rage within the bosom of a party that has been ten years in power; and the other from the fact that, owing probably to the grand moral reawakening caused by the struggle for national preservation, there was a vital reform sentiment among the people, prepared to assert itself just as fast as the outstanding issues of the war period — which, in parliamentary language, "had the floor" — should be disposed of. All this led, on the one hand, to Grant's administration being judged by a somewhat higher standard than had been usually applied to its predecessors; and, on the other, to its encounter-

ing a swarm of the most unreasonable and irritating objections. Out of this state of things arose the first marked phenomenon of the present campaign, the Liberal Republican defection ; and it showed both the influences we have mentioned : but whether it is to be defined as a reform movement subject to personal perturbations, or as a quarrel taking on the pretensions of reform, is not yet settled beyond question. Perhaps some light can be thrown upon it by considering the manner in which the principal man of the movement became detached from the support of the administration. When General Grant entered upon his Presidential term, Charles Sumner was not only the most prominent figure in the Republican party, but in American civil life. History, indeed, must place him in the van, if not actually in advance, of the guiding minds during that crisis which has resulted in the rescue and regeneration of our institutions. Made for rugged work, his foibles were as plain to his acquaintances as his merits were to the country. Such a man, out of gratitude as well as from the suggestions of an enlightened policy, deserved respectful and generous consideration on the part of all associated with him for common public purposes. If every one who was introduced to Erskine was expected to pay proper regard in conversation to the great principle of the right of trial by jury, if Chatham's most esteemed friends had to wait patiently in his anteroom till his vestments and crutch had been properly disposed and the light adjusted with due Rembrandt effect, it was surely worth while for a new and unskilled Republican President to have paid special attention and even deference to Senator Sumner. It is to the eternal honor of General Grant that he showed a soldier-like delicacy and discretion toward his chief antagonist in the field, when he had him in his power. He ought to have been at least equally delicate and discreet toward his chief supporter in civil affairs, when the latter's power was so considerable and desirable. Had he understood this duty as well as President Lincoln did, it is almost safe to say that Mr. Sumner's defection — so regretted by the best friends he still has — would never have occurred. We are not attempting to settle the question of moral responsibility among the parties to this affair, nor to determine the point at which policy would

cease to be a virtue ; but we are endeavoring to take a fair historic view of an event in which, as in most public events, personal influences played an inseparable part. Instead of pursuing the wiser course, the President neglected, not to say slighted, the Senator. The latter was not consulted, as he had a right to be, even in his province of foreign relations ; his opponents in the Senate received marked executive favor ; his intimate friend, Mr. Motley, was summarily and rudely removed from his responsible position ; and Mr. Sumner himself was deposed from the chairmanship which he had signally honored. True, the latter indignity was inflicted by the Senator's own colleagues, but if not prompted by executive influence, it might have been averted by it. The San Domingo agitation widened the breach, till Mr. Sumner stood in open revolt against the President, and ultimately against his administration. From this point onward, truth compels us to say, that the personal injustice, the passion and vindictiveness were, so far as they were discernible to the public, wholly on the side of the Senator. The exhibition is lamentable, but it is not subject to the criticism of those upon whom rests the consciousness that they might have possibly prevented it, or that they ought at least to have made the effort.

While Mr. Sumner is not to be taken as the complete type of the leading class who joined in the Liberal exodus from the Republican party, there were points of similarity in the personal influences visibly operative upon all. Mr. Trumbull and Mr. Schurz, Mr. Greeley and General Banks, undeniably had their grievances with the administration or its too often officious champions, although it is impossible to say how far these were allowed to influence their public action ; and the same peculiarity can be traced throughout the length and breadth of the Liberal movement. There was little in common at first between the individual seceders, and the whole movement had the questionable aspect of proceeding downward from the leaders, instead of upward from the masses. An organ of the party, commenting upon the little encouragement derived from the returns of the election in Maine, says that political reforms do not originate among such populations as the voters of that State. The truth is, it is exactly among such populations that they

do originate, as a general thing. When a young British nobleman was sneering at "tea-table reforms," a veteran statesman said, "Never do that; all the reforms in my day have come up from the tea-table." In this country, certainly, there never was a great popular movement, reformatory or otherwise, that did not make itself heard in the "back towns" before it reached Washington. However, the Liberal demonstration was not long in forming its own channels and taking on its distinctive public character. A local contest in Missouri, where a portion of the Republicans had joined with the Democrats against the body of the supporters of the administration as to some points of State policy, particularly amnesty to the late rebels and revenue reform, was seized upon as the nucleus for a national organization. Thence originated the "Cincinnati movement," favored by the Liberal Republicans on the one side, and the "Passivist" Democrats on the other, and ending its first stage with the Cincinnati Convention of May 1st.

That body met avowedly and almost exclusively as a reform gathering, devoted to reform in general and to revenue reform (to be embodied in a purely revenue tariff) in particular. The person chiefly mentioned in connection with the Presidential nomination to be made by the convention was Charles Francis Adams, whose name, should he accept the honor, was a sufficient guaranty that he would keep the movement true to its professed objects, and whose character commanded the respect of all parties. The honor, to the utter surprise and merriment of the people, fell upon Horace Greeley. Precisely how this result was brought about is not known to this day, — whether it came from previous negotiations or understandings with Democratic leaders, of which there are some evidences extant, or was achieved through the skilful tactics of General Blair and Governor Brown of Missouri, in the convention itself, or is to be accepted as the last case of political spontaneous combustion, originating in the inflammable materials of a miscellaneous gathering. What is known is, that Mr. Greeley's nomination proved as great a surprise to the more prominent and best participants in the convention as to the people outside, and a great source of grief as well. Here was a revenue-reform convention nominating the most radical and inveterate



protectionist in the country ; a movement for the purification of politics seized upon and controlled by some of the most desperate political gamblers that even New York City could send to Cincinnati ; and an endeavor to fill the chief magistracy of the Union with a true statesman resulting in the presentation of a man who, in spite of the talents which had made him a power in his sphere, exhibited not a single statesmanlike quality in his whole nature. Those who had gone into the convention for the purpose of founding a party on a reform policy, whatever had been their faith in reform as a principle, were confounded and paralyzed. They might have repudiated the nomination and made another on the spot ; and, since the convention had no formal delegate authority, they might thus have gone before the country with the full weight attaching to the wisdom of their action. But they had not the nerve and intrepidity for this. They hesitated and lost their last opportunity to make their principles felt in this campaign.

In the mean time, where was the old Democratic party, so long the ruling political force of the country ? At the point of death as an organization. A writer, whose liveliness is quite in contrast with the solemnity of the subject, affirms that death does not necessarily mean departure from the scenes of life, and he contends that the distinction finds confirmation in such popular phrases as " dead and gone " and the like. Perhaps the Democratic party, therefore, was dead, but not gone. It had seen the main questions which it had contested during the last dozen years of its life decided irrevocably against it, and incorporated in the Constitution or imbedded in permanent legislation. Its prestige had been shattered by its equivocal and carping attitude toward the government in the great struggle for national existence, and during the reconstruction period its mere obstructive activity had exposed it to such uninterrupted defeats at the polls, that it was doubtful if it would make any Presidential nomination. Symptoms of the same condition, indeed, had been disclosed in 1868, when the traditions of the party seemed likely for a time to be disregarded by the nomination of Chief Justice Chase for the Presidency ; but in 1872 the conviction had become general among the more vigilant and practical spirits of the organization, that it was the merest folly conceivable to enter into another national campaign

under the old party form, badges, watchwords, and leaders. That is, the day which had finally come upon the old Federal party and upon the Whig party, was now confronting the Democracy, and they looked about to save themselves by translation,—a feat brilliant but of exceeding rarity in this world. The progress of the Republican defection had, accordingly, been watched with the keenest interest, as promising to afford that relief which could be discerned in no other quarter. Thoughtful Democrats saw an opportunity to slough off worn-out and discredited pledges and substitute new strength from what they called “live issues”; the calculating had fresh visions of offices to be obtained through the reinforcement of the usual Democratic array at the polls by all the Liberal Republican voters; and the rank and file were rallied to the inspiring, if not elevating, cry of “Anything to beat Grant.”

This tendency was particularly obvious where it was hardly to have been expected, in the Southern wing of the Democracy, who thus appeared to be applying the last public advice of Jefferson Davis, to wait patiently until they saw their political opponents “divided and at issue with themselves, and then join the party and support the candidate and the platform that promises a restoration of constitutional liberty”; and also to be fulfilling apparently a former prediction of Mr. Greeley’s, that “they expect to regain as Democrats, through elections, the power they lost as rebels through the war.” This singular result certainly did not spring from any new-born impulse toward reform at the South, for those representatives of the section who met the hesitating Liberals at the “Fifth Avenue Conference,” to see what should be done about Mr. Greeley’s candidature, horrified their associates by their utter indifference to the whole reform question, “caring no more about it,” according to one of the conferrees, “than a starving person cares about the religious creed of a man who gives him a dinner.” The same Liberal authority testifies to utterances of “a thirst for revenge” on that occasion,—which may have been only the more intense Southern expression of the prevailing Democratic determination to beat Grant. Their peculiar readiness to adopt Mr. Greeley, in spite of his championship of nearly all the reconstruction measures, especially of those

denounced for their "centralization" tendencies, could only be explained by their remembrance of his advocacy of the right of secession at the very moment when such a voice at the North was most fearfully potential at the South, of his misplaced peace negotiations at Niagara Falls, and of his bailing of Jefferson Davis, as well as by the "gratitude" which has been politically defined as "a lively sense of favors yet to come." However that may have been, it was the fact, at once apparent to all intelligent observers, that the idea of accepting Mr. Greeley as the Democratic candidate for the Presidency was especially popular with the Southern section of the party, and was making its way with such rapidity through the rest of the organization as to insure its consummation at Baltimore. The only incidental question that arose in the mean time was as to whether the Liberal candidate should be merely indorsed, and commended, under the circumstances, to the support of the Democracy, or should receive a formal, old-fashioned nomination. The latter process was adopted, because, as explained by leading Democratic authorities, it would enable their party, in case Mr. Greeley should be elected, "to control his administration."

It will be seen that, at this point, the vital question comes in, what was the real character and extent of that change in the Democratic party which could constrain it to the unnatural and unprecedented expedient of going outside of its own ranks for a Presidential candidate? We have said that the party was at the point of death as a political entity and force; and the proof is, that it was no longer able to keep the field with its old organization alone, with its distinctive flag still flying and its record unbroken. It had become, in fact, through the disintegrating recoil of its own bad courses, but an aggregation of individual Democrats, detained within the old party lines because they had nowhere else to go. They might be grouped into three classes, of which the first comprised those who had heartily and from conviction "accepted the situation," as it was termed, or — which will answer as a sufficiently comprehensive designation — had become sincerely reconciled to the adoption of the principle of equal rights as the basis of our regenerated organic law, and who would be faithful to its logi-

cal application in practice. It may be conceded that this class of Democrats still exists to take part in the campaign, and cast votes for Mr. Greeley. But it cannot be large, either absolutely or relatively. It is confined to the young men — like those “not over forty years of age,” who alone originally accepted Harvey’s theory of the circulation of the blood — and to those men of thoughtful and independent minds upon whom partisan ties rest lightly. The fact that these men, throughout the last decade, have always had the benefit of a natural mode of expressing their approval of Republican measures by leaving their own and going over to the Republican party, and that thousands have availed themselves of that privilege, implies that they have not left many behind them of like convictions; nor do we see any record of such in the usual conventions and other authentic manifestations of the Democratic party, previous to the advent of Liberalism, when such record could have been attributed to principle and not to the hope of spoils. It was only the opportune supremacy of this class that could have justified Mr. Sumner’s professed belief in the wholesale conversion of the Democracy, — that could really have wrought the marvel of “the deformed transformed”; and that supremacy was never even pretended. The second class was composed of those Democrats who, within their sphere, made good the rebel boast of having been merely “overpowered, not conquered.” They acquiesced in the three last constitutional amendments and the general results of reconstruction just so far, and so far only, as they were compelled to do so by the stress of irresistible public opinion. Whether this class still remains numerous or not within the Democratic lines, it is obvious that the only safe way to deal with it is to keep it fixedly under the impression that the fruits of the war, as embodied in our political system, are a finality. Another grand decision of the people in the line of those heretofore made, four years more of the steady sway and extension of impartial rights, will confirm these unapt students in the school of experience, beyond any danger of retrogression or wavering. But open to them now the prospect, or even the chance, of cancelling the work of reconstruction, by expelling its authors from power and installing its enemies, and all their progress hitherto is

undone in a moment, and they are changed from a negative element on the right side to a positive mischief-making force on the wrong side.

There remain, then, those Democrats who are at heart hostile to the substantial achievements of reconstruction, and who mean to arrest and undo them at the first opportunity, and so far as the circumstances of the times will allow. These are they who carry forward the traditions and record of their party, whose representatives, in national convention assembled, only four years ago deliberately pronounced the whole reconstruction system "unconstitutional, revolutionary, and void." What reason is there to believe that they have changed their minds during this brief period, especially as they have all the while maintained that President Grant's administration was but adding one abuse to another in its policy toward the South? Great parties and extended social communities must have time for radical changes; the angle of reflection is equal to the angle of incidence in politics as well as in mechanics; and if the secession chiefs were, as one of them has boasted, thirty years engaged in indoctrinating their people for the outbreak, there is no hope that seven years of returning peace are sufficient to restore the victims of this malady to their right minds, and to expel the taint from public life. Accordingly, we have seen, within the last three years, several thousand well-authenticated cases of Ku-Klux violence, the horrible nature of which has been sufficiently certified to by such high-minded and distinguished Democrats as Mr. Stanberry and Reverdy Johnson. We have seen, during the present year, the Democrats of Kentucky — where they are strong enough to speak their minds with freedom — expressly reaffirming a former platform condemnatory of negro suffrage. And within a month or two we have seen the Democrats of West Virginia voting for a constitution framed to discriminate against the rights of the colored citizens of the State. Innumerable expressions of a determination to reverse the work of reconstruction might be quoted, not only from leading Southern men and newspapers, but from representative Democrats at the North. Of the latter, Judge Jeremiah S. Black of Pennsylvania, by reason of his high professional standing and his public career, will serve as a fair example. He speaks

of the present contest as "not all about men, and not wholly on questions of administration," and points out that the real question relates to what he considers the evils inherent in the reconstruction system. Even Mr. Greeley's election, he admits, will not extirpate these evils; "but it will," he declares, "begin the process of their gradual extinction," for which he has faith in Mr. Greeley, not only on account of his history and character, but in consequence of "the moral influence which the Democrats will necessarily exert upon his conduct." In review, therefore, of this branch of our inquiry, we think we are warranted in the very moderate statement that there is among the Democrats of to-day a strong reactionary element, which particularly interests itself in the election of Mr. Greeley.

Lest we be thought to have overlooked another section of the Democracy, which, on the score of party pedigree and inherited prestige, would seem to claim some attention, let us say a word or two in reference to the Straight-out Democrats, who have thrust a candidate into the field, though it is still doubtful at our time of writing whether they will be able to keep him there. The doings of the Louisville Convention and the nomination of Charles O'Connor — with his replies so deliciously garnished with lofty, impracticable, and incomprehensible sentiments, stamping him as the Don Quixote of a vanishing era — are, indeed, farcical enough, but they are significant as to some of the points we have already discussed. They show that there was not moral firmness enough in the Democratic party to prevent its somersault in policy, and not vitality enough to put forth any practical body of principles on the part of those who remained to represent the old organization. If this was the legitimate drama, the Democratic patrons appeared to be quite justified in rushing to the melodramatic exhibition of Cincinnati, for there was life there and not much danger of pathos being mistaken for fun.

Thus we have before us the antagonistic issues and forces of the Presidential campaign of 1872. The student of the era, like the average voter, perceives the usual disproportion of surplusage to substance, of irrelevant personalities to cogent arguments on either side. The roar of laughter that greeted Mr. Greeley's nomination has subsided in a way which his friends

regard as quite complimentary to the dignifying effect of formidable strength. Mr. Nast's caricatures of that candidate, like Mr. Sumner's panegyrics, — nearly as amusing, though hardly as life-like, — have ceased to attract attention ; and all the noise about Grant's gift-takings, nepotism, seaside loiterings, etc., has been dismissed as of equally trifling account in the scale of national issues. Such things may qualify opinion as to candidates, but they do not affect their support any more than the great editor's grotesque chirography would disturb his professional standing, or the great general's cigar would interfere with his success in the field. The day is far distant when the American people will decide a Presidential contest on the strength of any considerations purely personal ; at all events, they have dropped them from this contest.

There is another thing, however, which has been dropped that is much more serious ; for we think it must be conceded on all sides by this time that the question of reform is not now an issue before the country. Possibly it may be doubted whether a Presidential campaign is a fit time for initiating any real reform movement, for it is just then that all the mercenary, corrupting, anti-reform influences and agencies are at the height of their activity. As well expect a Western steamboat captain to set about repairs in the midst of a race. What should have been done was to pass suitable reform measures, and to make their enforcement "all snug and tight," before the tug for the Presidency came on. In this respect the Republicans were negligent, faulty, and all the more so that their President had led the way and invited their support. The measure of civil-service reform, which he established for officering the departments on the principle of ascertained merit, though limited and doubtless imperfect, was an excellent beginning. It failed — so far as it has failed — solely from want of Congressional support ; that is, when the trouble is traced down to its roots, the people were found to be not yet earnest enough about the matter to compel their representative servants to relinquish an inherited brokerage in the patronage of the government. This kind of reform, if it ever comes, must strike "the member for the district" first of all ; for suppose the President to be limited to one term, according to Mr. Gree-

ley's temporary hobby, the Congressmen would still have their own re-election to look after, their district friends to reward and enemies to punish ; and it is *they* who have usurped nine tenths of the appointing power of the executive, with, of course, the full knowledge and consent of their constituents. When the latter are ready for reform, general or special, it will come. The isolated incident which led many enthusiastic persons to suppose that the advent had already occurred — the overthrow of the Tammany thieves — was a special revolt against intolerable outrage, rather than the manifestation of a general sentiment in favor of reform, although such sentiment is unquestionably gathering strength all the time. Reform is in the air ; but it scarcely touches the solid ground. It certainly did not at Cincinnati. The body there assembled was expressly called together on a platform of revenue reform ; and yet, after wrangling two days, it was discovered that those who had no right to be there at all were strong enough to shuffle the whole question aside and to nominate the chief protectionist of the country. And the candidate capped the climax of recreancy by swallowing all his strongest convictions. In his letter to Mr. Schurz, — who seems, about two months after the nomination, to have had a very natural curiosity to learn what had become of reform, — Mr. Greeley says, in portraying his ideal of a chief magistrate as a sort of Brahma of a new revelation, that “ he should dread nothing but the accusing voice of history and the inexorable judgment of God ” ; but at the same time he admits, by his own pledges to abdicate in advance the constitutional safeguard of the veto upon all revenue measures, that, as to this class of legislation at least, his two supreme objects of dread may fade away before the political obligations incurred in getting into office. From this drying up of reform at the very fountain-head of the coalition movement, it is evident that we have nothing to expect in that quarter, even if we could overlook the notorious clique of politicians who brought about Mr. Greeley's nomination, or the fact that his champions and organs in the campaign have abandoned nearly all reference to the subject. The best that we can hope is, that a continuance of the present administration, by the general quiet it promises to afford and



the exclusion of all new sources of distraction, will provide a sort of coffer-dam, within which the foundation of genuine reform may be securely laid.

Indeed, there is obviously a "previous question" which precludes as yet that full and free consideration of reform by the people which is requisite to its development, and which may come within the next half dozen years. That we are now very near the closing up of one distinct political era and the opening of another is apparent from various signs, such as the disappearance of well-defined principles on either side, the wavering of party lines and the decay of party discipline, the eccentric movements of leaders who once had the fixity of figure-heads on men-of-war, the strong family likeness of all platforms, and the general looking forward to new issues, without a corresponding preparation to meet them. These things indicate that the epoch of the war and reconstruction is about to give way to another with a totally different set of questions, probably reformatory and financial. But the people have an invincible repugnance to dealing with more than one class of questions at a time, or to opening new ones before the old ones are completely and permanently settled. And here, we imagine, is the hinge on which the present Presidential campaign will turn, making the popular decision analogous to the vote of confidence, or want of confidence, which usually settles the fate of British ministries. Two administrations are offered the American people, the one to be conducted by General Grant, the other by Mr. Greeley. Which will they have? In considering the probable import and effect of Grant's reelection, we need not pay the least attention to the Republican platform, since the present administration answers every purpose as a rule of judgment and a basis of expectations. The President's second term will be very much like his first. "Gentlemen of the jury," said Mr. Choate, "we have fulfilled our part of the contract by offering them a good, sound, substantial second-hand harness." The administration now in its fourth year, if neither perfect nor signally brilliant, has been so successful as to be dull, and so meritorious as to have its merits taken as a matter of course. It has preserved peace in our foreign relations, having at length disposed of the only

threatening topic of disturbance — and a very serious one — in a way which not only satisfies the body of the people, but actually goes further than any event of modern times toward ushering in the sway of universal peace. A humane Indian policy has been initiated, and a judicious pressure brought to bear upon polygamy, which puts it, as Mr. Lincoln said of its twin relic of barbarism, “in the process of extinction.” The national debt has been reduced as no other debt ever was, the annual interest-charge having been diminished by over \$22,000,000 ; our bonds have been brought up to par in gold, and are being renewed with new bonds at a reduced rate of interest ; the currency shows an advance of twenty-four cents ; over a thousand items of internal taxation, irritating as well as burdensome, have been compressed into a half-dozen, with a reduction of at least one third in the total amount levied ; the revenues have been found subject to an unprecedentedly slight shrinkage in passing from the pockets of the people to the coffers of the treasury ; the delicate financial machinery of the country appears to be working with comparative ease and security ; the hum of prosperous industry rises from every section, and mercantile confidence reigns supreme. But it is said there is a hideous blot in this picture in the condition of the South, aggravated, if not entirely produced, by the despotic disposition, military policy, and systematic neglect of those at the head of the government. When the electioneering contest is over, charges of this nature will surely disappear. It is not necessary to say that the evils which have undoubtedly rested heavily upon the people of the Southern States have been brought upon them by themselves, — they have grown inevitably out of the exigency. In the chaos, social and political, which there succeeded the war, the ballot had to be given to the freedman. His ignorance and other immediate disqualifications were distinctly seen and lamented ; but the ground theory of our institutions, all the considerations of the future, and the occurrence of an opportunity which, if neglected at the moment, could perhaps never be redeemed, left no other course. The old master class might have done more than they did to render the initiation of the new citizens into their rights rapid and advantageous to the community, and the same may be said

of the carpet-baggers who overran many parts of the South ; but both these classes were equally beyond the reach and control of the government. Perhaps the executive did not sympathize so openly as it should have done with the victims of misrule, but it could *do* nothing, without exposing itself still further to the charge of interfering in local affairs. And so it happened that South Carolina, for instance, in the paralysis which followed an exhausting war on its own soil, and the upheaval of its whole social system, suffered, just as the commercial metropolis of the Union had suffered, from the temporary ascendancy of scoundrels over honest men, in addition to those other evils consequent upon the derangement of business, loss of productive power, and vitiated currency, which were afflicting the whole country. At the same time enmity and injustice toward the negro, and those immediately laboring for his elevation, broke out in the form of Ku-Klux violence, which was terribly far from being sporadic in its character, but bore, on the contrary, every evidence of a gigantic political conspiracy, waged for the most part, indeed, by worthless individuals, but having its roots in a bad public sentiment and the sympathies of influential classes. The government called for new measures of repression, and they were granted with powers ample and even dangerous in their scope, and possibly not fully justified under the circumstances. They were used, however, by the President with a discretion and moderation which have compelled the recognition even of those to whom they were most offensive. The cry of military domination was absurd, because, if for no other reason, the military forces were not available for the purpose. Out of the reduced army of thirty thousand men the government could spare only one tenth for service at the South, exclusive of ordinary garrison duty. Amnesty, which the President had early recommended, has been in the mean time extended, till there remain excluded from the privilege of holding office only some two hundred of those original secessionist leaders whose " bad eminence " it was to add perjury to the crime of treason ; and these probably have only to go through with the form of application to Congress, or to wait for another session, to have their disability entirely swept away. Already thirteen Confederate generals are sitting in Congress.

Suffrage is, and for five years has been, so far as the Federal government could effect it, universal at the South; and reform movements to rectify local abuses are originating, as they should, in the several communities concerned and among those heartily devoted to the new order of things. All that seems to be wanted is the quiet continuance of the present opportunities and dominant influences, in order that the great settlement may complete itself; and that is precisely what we are to expect from the re-election of President Grant.

What, on the other hand, is the country to expect from the election of Mr. Greeley? To carry him into the Presidency is to put a Democratic majority into the House of Representatives, the Senate, for a time at least, remaining Republican. Discord, therefore, between the legislative branches of the government, an eccentric, fickle, and inefficient executive, and a ravenous horde of office-seekers swarming up from various factions outside, — this is the outline of the new situation which is promised us, and which was but faintly prefigured by the national experience under Andrew Johnson's administration, — a prospect which the business classes of the country certainly cannot contemplate with any complacency. Suppose, however, that through the weak or corruptible elements of the Senate, or by the effect of new elections, that body is brought into accord with the House and the President, — is the prospect any better? Certainly not in the direction of reform. In his Portland speech, and in his assurances to General Gordon of Georgia, Mr. Greeley is the first of our Presidential candidates to give a public pledge as to the manner in which he shall distribute the offices and reward his supporters at the polls. It is understood, therefore, that his inauguration will be the signal for a general revolution among the fifty thousand office-holders under the government; and in the midst of that hurly-burly, who will remember "competitive examinations," unless it be some applicant for place successful and happy enough to indulge in the best joke of the season? Neither can such a prospect be regarded as favorable to the national finances. In the first place it would involve a change, and no change is wanted, least of all one to be inaugurated by a President who believes that a card tacked upon the treasury doors would accomplish the instant resumption of specie

payments, by making the gold in the treasury — which he also thinks ought to be sold off — convertible into five or six times the same amount of paper-money ; who has in his train repudiationists on the one hand, and on the other those who advocate the payment of pensions to rebel soldiers and even compensation for the loss of slaves, and who think they see the way for approaching such schemes through so-called revenue measures, which Mr. Greeley has disabled himself from resisting by renouncing the use of the veto.

These, however, serious as they are, may be called minor objections to Mr. Greeley's election ; the decisive one is this, that, in relation to reconstruction and the security of all those great results which have been bought by the blood and treasure of the country, that election would mean *reaction*. The composition of his supporters, their avowed aims, and the growth and controlling tendencies of their movement, all drive to this unwelcome conclusion. Every unrepentant rebel in the country, except the few so frenzied as to have fallen into the forlorn hope led by Mr. O'Connor, is in this coalition enterprise, and is there for a purpose ; all who are hostile to the establishment of impartial rights, all who would undo special parts of the reconstruction system, and all who are consciously or unconsciously playing into the hands of these men by their reckless political sympathy and co-operation, are now moving fraternally forward under the leadership of Mr. Greeley. It is in this connection chiefly that his personal traits become of any concern to the country. In order to resist or counteract the malign influences that would be swept into power with him, he would have need to be an exceptionally discreet, strong, stable character. That is exactly what Mr. Greeley is not. In the great crucial crisis of secession, when he ought to have been adamant, he was putty. And the fault was not exceptional : it was characteristic, and cropped out all through the war, to the serious detriment of the loyal cause. The mere fact, indeed, that an extreme "centralizationist," an advocate of all the features of reconstruction most offensive to his present supporters, and of still severer measures which a Republican Congress declined to adopt, a life-long denouncer of the Democracy, and a recent eulogist of President Grant, should now be found heading a cause and a party so

utterly at war with his record, and all for the apparent purpose of gratifying a chronic ambition to get into office, affords sufficient proof of his dangerous unfitness for the Presidency at this juncture.

Thousands of his supporters would have no other understanding than that his success meant somehow the reversal of that policy which they have stigmatized as despotism, and which, with all the blindness of prejudice and the sense of injury combined, they have abominated as the cause of their own misfortunes; and we should again witness that hideous uprising of exulting disloyalty and violence which greeted the reactionary course of President Johnson. With these would be joined the mischievous intellects that have never yet paused in their scheming to undermine the whole fabric of reconstruction by whatever insidious measures the times suggested to their hands. It is not necessary to suppose, as General Banks suggests for the play of his grandiloquent refutation, that the restoration of slavery would be immediately attempted. Other lines of operation would be more available and profitable. The Southern war claims, which, at the time the court for their adjudication was established, judicious United States Senators estimated as likely to amount to not over seven or eight millions of dollars in all, have already swollen to fifty millions, and are coming forward at a rate which bids fair to reach double that amount before the close of the year. These would receive a tremendous impetus, in volume and strength, by Greeley's election, and open a new mine of trouble and corruption. Of the ingenious efforts which would be made to amend the pension laws and to do away with all discriminations between those who, it will be said, engaged in a great controversy to determine constitutional questions, we have already spoken. All the laws of Congress, at least, which give to the Federal government, in denial of "State's rights," the enforcement of the later amendments of the Constitution, would be assailed, and if possible repealed. By this process, if successful, the protection of the freedman in his new immunities would be remitted to local legislation; and if that would prove, in some States, any better than slavery, it would be owing to the development of a spirit among the late master class more

satisfactory than we have yet seen generally manifested. Let us distinctly say, however, that we do not apprehend that, even if the worst came to the worst, these nefarious designs could be accomplished. The virtue that has regenerated the Republic will be found adequate to confirm its safety at all points. But we should have a temporary arrest of all the present pacificatory processes; bitter agitation, accompanied possibly with violent outbreaks, would embroil the sections, convulse business, and repress the prosperity and development of the country,—and surely that would be enough. All this, too, would be done under the cry of “reconciliation”! Reconciliation, indeed, is desirable and indispensable; but it is a poor compliment to the rectitude of the American people to say that it can be anything else than an incident of the right settlement of outstanding questions. If, then, the settlement upon which the nation has determined and has brought so near to consummation is wrong, wrong in basis and wrong in purpose, let it be overthrown; and the sooner we begin to build anew the better. But if it is right, as even the Cincinnati platform substantially admits, let us stand by it and keep it in the charge of its tried friends till it is perfected forever.